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Date: October 13, 2023

To: Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee
State Board of Fire Services

From: Brandon Erickson, Staff Services Manager I

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:
SFT User Portal Invoicing Feature Development

Recommended Actions:
Information Only

Background Information:
State Fire Training (SFT) currently invoices for courses after the Registered Instructor or authorized administrator submits the completed Excel roster. SFT processes course results within 10 business days of receipt. The CAL FIRE Departmental Accounting Office (DAO) generates SFT invoices and mails them to the billing agency and/or Registered Instructor. Course diplomas are issued prior to receipt of payment for the course. SFT is currently developing functionality with the SFT User Portal that allows the registered instructor or authorized agency administrator to directly enter student rosters via the SFT User Portal and pay invoices after roster submission and a staff audit via digital payment methods.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:
SFT has experienced difficulty in collecting course fees, with some organizations having past-due balances in excess of $80,000 and total past-due balances across all agencies in excess of hundreds of thousands of dollars. These delinquent invoices create additional staff work for SFT and DAO in tracking and collecting past-due balances. It also takes significant staff hours to manually process course returns via the current Excel roster submission. The new SFT User Portal Invoicing Feature will allow a streamlined process wherein the roster is entered directly into the SFT User Portal and invoices are generated and automatically delivered upon staff approval of the course return. Instructors or agencies will then be able to immediately pay via credit/debit card or through their bank

account which does have a service fee. Additionally, Instructors or billing agencies may mail in a check without paying a service fee. This new process will significantly reduce the staff time required to process a course and result in invoices being generated much quicker.

To ensure full payment of course fees, SFT will be adjusting the business process so that course diplomas will no longer be issued until full course payment is rendered. This will ensure prompt payment of invoices.

Accredited academies will still have diplomas released at the time of course return. SFT will place a $30,000 outstanding balance limit for these academies, and all class approvals and processing will be held if they surpass this limit.

SFT will release detailed information bulletins and guidance regarding the usage of the new system at the January 2024 Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) meeting. It is predicted that the new system and payment requirements will be implemented on July 1, 2024. There will be a pilot program prior to the full launch, that will allow agencies who participate to provide feedback.

Potential Agency Impacts:
All agencies and instructors will be required to comply with the new electronic course return process. Course diplomas will no longer be released until full course payment is received (except for accredited academies, as noted above). In many cases, the new process will allow enhanced ability for agencies and instructors to submit, receive invoices, pay, and receive diplomas in a significantly shorter time frame than currently possible.